

# FY2011 Appropriations Request Form

Office of Congresswoman Jackie Speier  
211 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515  
Phone: 202/225-3531  
Fax: 202/226-4183  
Website: [www.speier.house.gov](http://www.speier.house.gov)

**Date Submitted:**

February 12, 2010

**Project Name:**

Spark Program Bay Area

**Individual/Organization:** *(Is the grantee located in the 12<sup>th</sup> Congressional District?)*

Yes

**Amount Requested** *(if requesting report language, please attach.):*  
\$100,000

**Appropriations Bill/Account/Relevant Authorization law/bill/status**

Labor-HHS-Education – Department of Education – Elementary & Secondary Education

**Local Contact**

Von Diaz

Development & Communications Manager

251 Rhode Island Street, Suite 205, San Francisco, CA 94103

(415) 626-5470 ext. 110, [vdiaz@sparkprogram.org](mailto:vdiaz@sparkprogram.org)

**Organization's Main Activities.** *(Please limit your response to 250 words and indicate whether it is a public, non-profit or private for-profit entity.)*

Spark is a dropout prevention program that provides life-changing apprenticeships to youth in underserved communities in California. Based in San Francisco, Spark increases the education and employment rates of youth in San Francisco, Redwood City, and Los Angeles by engaging at-risk middle school students through one-on-one apprenticeships in workplaces. Spark focuses on 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students who have been identified by teachers and other educators as struggling with motivation and engagement in the classroom. The apprenticeship experience is

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complemented by a leadership curriculum, workshops, and field trips, which connect the apprenticeship experience to school and provide students with critical life skills such as financial literacy and future planning. Together these create a powerful sense of relevance for students, discourage negative behaviors, and ensure that students complete high school. Spark is a 501c3 nonprofit organization.

**Please show main items in the project and total cost in a simplified chart form.**  
*(Please include the amount of any Federal/State/Local/Private funds, including any in-kind resources.)*

**Spark Bay Area 2011 Project Budget**

Estimated Expenses				
Program Service Areas			Research & Dissemination	2011 Totals
	Redwood City	San Francisco		
Staff Salaries	\$17,081	\$20,000		\$37,081
Number of Staff: 5 Type of Staff: Bay Area Program Director, Bay Area Apprenticeship Manager, Program Development & Evaluation Manager, San Francisco Program Coordinator, Redwood City Program Coordinator				
<i>Staff Expenses</i>	\$17,081	\$20,000		\$37,081
Technology - IT Infrastructure Development	\$6,961	\$7,274	\$9,681	\$23,915
Evaluation Fees	\$945	\$987	\$1,252	\$3,184
Travel - Program	\$15,000	\$5,000	\$-	\$20,000
Program Supplies & Fees	\$2,844	\$3,476	\$-	\$6,320
Volunteer Background Check Expenses	\$4,275	\$5,225	\$-	\$9,500
<i>Direct Program Expenses</i>	\$30,024	\$21,962	\$10,933	\$62,919
<b>2010 Totals</b>	\$47,105	\$41,962	\$10,933	\$100,000

**Project Description, including a timeline, goals, expected outcomes and specific uses of Federal Funds.** *(Your response must focus on the requested funds rather than the organization's mission and general activities. Please limit your response to 250 – 500 words.)*

Spark's youth apprenticeship programs address the drop-out crisis in the Bay Area and Los Angeles by re-engaging at-risk middle school youth through hands-on, one-on-one professional apprenticeships. Spark's programs benefit taxpayers by helping many of California's neediest and most at-risk youth in San Francisco, Los Angeles and Redwood City develop the skills and motivation necessary to obtain a high school degree and become productive citizens. Furthermore, Spark's programs benefit taxpayers by tapping into an otherwise untapped resource—volunteers in workplaces—to increase the education and employment rates of youth.

Given the recent reductions in California's education budget, there is an increasing need for innovative education programs to provide opportunities for students in the most underserved communities to be successful in school and beyond. Each year, 120,000 Californians reach age 20 without a high school diploma, costing the state \$46.4 billion dollars in lost revenues and higher costs. Studies have shown that they have a dramatically higher chance of landing in prison, have lower life expectancies, and face high barriers to finding the employment needed to lift their families out of poverty.

Initial studies show Spark students have significantly higher retention in high school relative to non-Spark peers, as well as significant gains in school engagement, confidence, and classroom behavior. As Spark's initial cohorts approach graduation, Spark expects findings that graduation rates also increase among Spark students. Programs currently operate in low-income, high-need communities.

Through a Congressionally Directed Spending Earmark, Spark would be able to expand programs to communities throughout California. In 2010, Spark will arrange 288 apprenticeships for at-risk youth in the Bay Area and Los Angeles. This funding would help Spark increase enrollment to an estimated 480 students in 2011. Spark's long-term goal is to nationally impact our country's dropout crisis.

**How will this project request serve to expand the capacity of your organization and how will your organization sustain this work beyond the federal funding?** *(Your response must focus on the impact of the requested funds rather than the organization's long-term goals.)*

Although Spark has pursued federal funding opportunities, staff has found that the program does not fit within the framework of traditional federal or out-of-school time funding. As a result, a Congressionally Directed Spending Earmark would expand Spark's capacity to sustain and enhance existing programs, expand to other California communities, and increase enrollment by 40% in 2011. Spark aims to use the funds towards expanding to new communities by identifying and then building partnerships with public and charter schools in high-need districts throughout California.

Spark has already secured funding for 2011 from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation (\$20,000), the Draper Richards Foundation (\$100,000), the Peery Foundation (\$100,000), Ashoka (\$30,000), and various individual donors (\$35,000). Major ongoing funders for Spark's

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programs also include the S.H. Cowell Foundation and the Franklin & Catherine Johnson Foundation, as well as corporations such as eBay, State Farm Insurance, Union Bank of California, Kaiser Permanente, Enterprise Rent-a-Car, SanDisk, Symantec, Charles Schwab, and PG&E.

Spark has over 25 pending requests to potential foundation and corporate supporters, and is submitting 16-20 new requests every month to foundations across California. Spark's development team is also working to deepen Spark's individual donor base; in celebration of Spark's fifth anniversary, Spark launched its first major fundraising campaign in October of 2009, with a \$1M goal, and has already received over \$500,000 in donations and pledges from individuals and foundations.

### **Can this proposal be funded via fees levied on users of the service or via the ordinary capital budgeting process of the organization?**

Because we are a 5013 nonprofit organization, we do not levee fees on users of our services. This earmark will enable us to lay the foundation for greater growth in the Bay Area than what would be possible via our current funding sources.

### **What is the local significance of this project?**

Each year, 120,000 Californians reach age 20 without a high school diploma, costing the state \$46.4 billion dollars in lost revenues and higher costs. Studies have shown that they have a dramatically larger chance of landing in prison, have lower life expectancies, and face high barriers to finding the employment needed to lift their families out of poverty<sup>1</sup>.

Over 1.2 million American high school students drop out annually, including 18.9% of all high school students in California.<sup>2,3</sup> The dropout rate is more than 60% among Hispanic and African American students in the highest need neighborhoods in Los Angeles and the Bay Area.<sup>4,5</sup> According to America's Promise Alliance, minority students drop out at significantly higher rates than their peers; 50% of African American and Hispanic students fail to complete high school within four years.<sup>6</sup> Needless to say, high school graduation directly correlates with indicators of

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<sup>1</sup> Dynarski, M., Clarke, L. Cobb, B., Finn, J., Rumberger, R., and Smink, J. *Dropout Prevention: A Practice Guide* (NCEE 2008-4025). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. (2008): 4.

<sup>2</sup> Editorial Projects in Education, "Diplomas Count 2008. School to College: Can State P-16 Councils Ease the Transition?," special issue, *Education Week* 26, no. 40 (2008).

<sup>3</sup> California Department of Education, DataQuest. <<http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/>> Accessed: September 30, 2009.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> The William & Flora Hewlett Foundation, "A Problem with Broad Implications for California," September 2009.

<<http://www.hewlett.org/news/taking-to-the-road-in-search-of-a-career>> Accessed: November 6, 2009.

<sup>6</sup> America's Promise Alliance. <<http://www.americaspromise.org/Our-Work/Dropout-Prevention.aspx>>. Accessed: September 23, 2009.

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success in life. The Public Policy Institute of California estimates that by the year 2025, more than 85% of the jobs in California will require a high school diploma.<sup>7</sup>

Spark focuses on 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students who have been identified by teachers and other educators as struggling with motivation and engagement in the classroom, and currently operates program sites in Redwood City and San Francisco, with programs launching in Los Angeles in the spring of 2010. .

Spark's Redwood City sites—Garfield School and Hoover Elementary—serve a high-need population from the North Fair Oaks community. According to the Student Accountability Report Cards for the 2007-2008 school year, both schools have a Latino population of over 92%, with over 88% of students coming from low-income, immigrant families. These schools also struggle with meeting the state requirements for California standardized tests mainly because of the high percentage of English learners (over 76% of the student population).

Pre/Post program surveys given to students consistently show significant gains. In a focused survey of 20 participants from summer 2009, 100% of students rated their Spark experience as positive, and 95% reported specific improved skills, such as financial literacy, networking, and public speaking. Qualitative feedback from parents, mentors, and teachers confirms this. Finally, initial high school retention data shows that 55 of 56 students in our preliminary sample are on track to graduate from high school, a rate significantly higher than that of their non-Spark peers.

**How many residents of the 12<sup>th</sup> CD will benefit from this project? (i.e. jobs created, services rendered to, how many people, etc.)**

In 2010, Spark will serve 125 students in Redwood City. If granted, a Congressionally Directed Spending Earmark would enable Spark to increase student enrollment, and work with more high-need schools in San Mateo County in 2011. Spark's close integration with schools has created a lightweight model that has fostered rapid growth and will continue to enable the organization to scale effectively. Staff at partner schools in the Bay Area are responsible for natural areas of strength—student recruitment and curriculum delivery—while Spark focuses on its greatest strength, creating powerful apprenticeship experiences. In Redwood City, Spark partners with the Youth Adelante Afterschool Program to enrich their afterschool homework assistance and leadership curriculum with our one-on-one apprenticeship model. In this way, our work impacts both the students in our program and other schools and community organizations in San Mateo County.

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<sup>7</sup> Johnson, Hans. "Educating California: Choices for the Future," Public Policy Institute of California (June 2009): 5.

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**Please explain the federal interest in this proposal (i.e. meets a stated objective of federal policy, supports a federal agency, is the result of a federal law/mandate, etc.)**  
**(Sec. 213)**

The dropout crisis is endemic, both in California and nationally, and Spark has its sights set on a national scale. Given the recent reductions in education budgets, there is an increasing need for innovative programs to provide students in the most underserved communities with an opportunity to become productive citizens. The Department of Education Appropriations Act (H.R.3293) outlines a number of appropriations for education services that correlate with Spark's work, including: education for the disadvantaged, school improvement programs, innovation and improvement activities and career, technical, and adult education.

By 2014, Spark expects to have programs operating in at least six communities, including at least two of the nation's 10 largest cities where the dropout crisis is at its worst. This growth will be driven by Spark's partnership model, in which school partners—particularly charter management organizations—select students and deliver curricula, while Spark focuses on apprenticeship creation and the training of partner staff. As the organization evolves, Spark hopes to become a central convener and institute for the field of apprenticeships, gathering best practices, hosting trainings and conferences, conducting high-quality research, and developing the policy advocacy voice of the field. In five years, Spark expects that a significant portion of the education field in the United States will have heard of Spark's model, and that momentum for a national program will be building in an increasingly public fashion.

**List any other organizations or state/local elected officials who have expressed support for the project in writing.** *(Please submit copies of support letters along with the request form.)*

CA Senator Joe Simitian  
CA Assemblywoman Fiona Ma

**Does the organization have any other funding requests for this project?**  
*(Federal, State, Local or private request pending?)*

No

**Has the organization previously received Federal funds for this project?**  
*(Please list any funds received [by fiscal year] and briefly describe how those funds were spent.)*

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No

**Has the individual and/or organization submitted the project request to other Member offices? If so, please identify below the names of the Members of Congress and staff persons.**

Appropriations requests have been submitted to the following Member of Congress:

Sen. Dianne Feinstein  
Sen. Barbara Boxer  
Rep. Linda Sanchez  
Rep. Nancy Pelosi  
Rep. Barbara Lee  
Rep. Doris Matsui  
Rep. Diane E. Watson  
Rep. Mike Honda  
Rep. Loretta Sanchez

**Please attach a list of your organization's staff and board members from 2005 – 2010. (if any).**

#### **Spark Staff**

- Chris Balme, Executive Director
- Julie McGuire, Development Director
- Jon Spack, Director of National Growth
- Jen Bloomer, Bay Area Program Director
- Nathalie Wade, Bay Area Apprenticeship Manager
- Katie Krummeck, Program Development & Evaluation Manager
- Von Diaz, Development & Communications Manager
- Katie Griffin, Grants Manager
- Lupita Rodriguez, San Francisco Program Coordinator
- Abraham Abullarade, Redwood City Program Coordinator

#### **2010 Board of Directors**

- Chris Balme, Co-Founder & Executive Director
- Dana Bennis, Education Program Associate, Bay & Paul Foundations; Advisor, Calhoun School
- Anne Marie Burgoyne, Portfolio Director, Draper Richards Foundation
- Melia Dicker, Spark Co-Founder; Communications Director, Institute for Democratic Education in America

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- Zia Khan, Vice President, Strategy, Rockefeller Foundation.
- Nir Margalit, General Counsel, AdFam
- John McKee, Board Chairman, Dean of Development & College Relations, University of California - Berkeley
- Rodney Prezeau, Vice President, Business Strategy, Charles Schwab
- William Schawbel, CEO, Schawbel Corporation

**Past Members – Board of Directors**

- Dr. Sarah Stewart, Sequoia Union High School District
- Ranjan Parthasarathy, Sun Microsystems
- Ashley Quintana, Spark Alum, Youth Advisor, Occidental College
- Danielle Abaya, Spark Alum, Youth Advisor, UC Berkeley

**Please attach any additional relevant materials.**



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## California State Senate



### SENATOR S. JOSEPH SIMITIAN

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701 Ocean Street, Room 318A  
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Fax (831) 425-5124

February 4, 2010

Congresswoman Jackie Speier  
United States House of Representatives  
211 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Speier:

I am writing this letter in support of an FY 2011 appropriations request for Spark, a nonprofit organization that runs summer and after-school programs that match students with apprenticeships in professions of their choice at local workplaces. This FY 2011 request will allow Spark to expand its program to other communities.

As you well know, our nation continues to face a high school dropout crisis. Addressing it is critical to restoring our nation's economic vitality. Spark is an innovative approach to re-engaging at-risk students with hands-on, individualized apprenticeships.

My District Director, Hema Sareen Mohan, personally mentored a Spark student in the summer of 2009. Therefore, I am familiar with the program and its potential to transform a young person's life.

Spark received the prestigious Ashoka and Draper Richards Fellowships, top awards for nonprofits, in recognition of the organization's potential for large-scale social impact. I hope you will give Spark's FY 2011 appropriations request for growing their award winning model to cities across the United States every consideration. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. Joseph Simitian".

S. Joseph Simitian  
State Senator, Eleventh District

STATE CAPITOL  
P.O. BOX 942849  
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FAX (916) 319-2112

DISTRICT OFFICE  
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# Assembly California Legislature



**COMMITTEES**  
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DEVELOPMENT OF A 10TH UNIVERSITY  
OF CALIFORNIA, MERCED CAMPUS  
FOSTER CARE  
INTERNATIONAL TRADE  
RAIL TRANSPORTATION

February 10, 2010

Congresswoman Jackie Speier  
400 S. El Camino Real, Suite 750  
San Mateo, CA 94402

Dear Congresswoman Speier:

This letter serves to indicate my support for the Spark program and their FY 2011 appropriations request.

During my time on the Board of Supervisors and now as a California State Assemblymember I have always put the mentorship of youth and education as my highest priorities. Through my internship program, as well as my support of the Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps in San Francisco, I have worked to make sure there are programs in which youth can find mentorship and support that will assist them in becoming strong members of the community. In addition, our office has hosted two Spark apprentices. I have seen first hand the quality of the program as well as the quality of the students who come through our office.

Spark is an organization that attends to the drop-out crisis and provides a proactive solution to address this issue. In San Francisco and San Mateo counties combined the high school drop-out rate is 33.7% with a majority of these students coming from low-income families. I know the Spark program takes this issue head on to insure that these students do not fall through the cracks.

I strongly support the hard work and dedication Spark provides for our young people and I urge your support for Spark's FY 2011 appropriations request.

If you need any additional information, please contact my District Director by emailing Bob.Twomey@asm.ca.gov or calling our San Francisco office at (415) 557-2312.

In Peace and Friendship,

Fiona Ma, CPA  
Assembly Majority Whip  
TWELFTH DISTRICT



Fm: JSG